



Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

P.O. Box 570, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0570 Phone: 573-751-6400 FAX: 573-751-6010
RELAY MISSOURI for Hearing and Speech Impaired 1-800-735-2966 VOICE 1-800-735-2466

Margaret T. Donnelly
Director



Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon
Governor

September 2, 2009

Dear Child Care Provider:

October 1st marks the official start of flu season. It is expected with Novel H1N1 Flu there will be a larger number of people in Missouri who will be affected this season. The Department of Health and Senior Services would like to remind child care providers what steps can be taken to help control the spread of H1N1. Educating your staff, parents, and children on prevention techniques is the most important thing you, as a provider, can do to protect the health of the children in your care.

Educate! Educate! Educate!

- ✓ Teach children good hand washing practices – 20 seconds with soap and water when hands are soiled; alcohol-based hand rub when hands are not visibly soiled
- ✓ Teach children to cover their mouth when coughing or sneezing – into your arm or a tissue and toss
- ✓ Teach children to stay at least six feet away from people who are sick
- ✓ Reinstruct staff to clean (wash, rinse and sanitize) frequently touched surfaces, commonly shared items and toys – H1N1 can survive on environmental surfaces and can infect a person for 2 to 8 hours after being deposited on the surface
- ✓ Teach staff to separate children who become sick from others
- ✓ Teach parents and staff to keep children and themselves at home when they are ill. No one should return to day care until they have had no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine, even if they feel better.

The Department of Health and Senior Services provides posters and prevention kits found on our website <http://www.dhss.mo.gov/WHACK/>. This website offers preventative fun activities for children to whack the flu. “What are the signs and symptoms of the flu” is also available on our child care web page <http://www.dhss.mo.gov/ChildCare/index.html>. As this flu season progresses, please check this website for regular updates.

As you educate staff and family about the flu also plan for what a pandemic could mean to your child care facility (W.H.O. has already declared this).

Prepare! Prepare! Prepare!

During a pandemic 40 percent of your workforce may be out with the flu or family related illnesses. Establishing procedures prior to such an outbreak will ensure continuation of operations and care for children.

- ✓ Identify essential services based on staffing levels
- ✓ Develop infection control policies; keep extra supplies on hand such as soap, paper towels, tissues, alcohol based hand rub
- ✓ Develop a plan to communicate with staff and parents – hotlines, calling trees, emails
- ✓ Explain to staff and parents your acceptance policy during a pandemic – sick children will not be permitted to attend
- ✓ Practice daily health checks –observe each child for respiratory (coughing/breathing problems), fever, rash, or other signs of illness.
- ✓ Report any unusual increase in illness in either children or staff with you local public health agency
- ✓ Report ALL confirmed cases of H1N1 at your facility to your local public health agency.

Please contact your Child Care Facility Specialist if you have any other concerns or questions.

www.dhss.mo.gov

Healthy Missourians for life.

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services will be the leader in promoting, protecting and partnering for health.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER: Services provided on a nondiscriminatory basis.